



Does teaching parents to give time-outs hurt their attachment relationships with their children?

16th Annual Conference on Parent-Child Interaction
Therapy for Traumatized Children

September 21, 2016

Beth Troutman, PhD, ABPP
University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine

Overview

- ▶ A little theory
- ▶ A little clinical application
- ▶ A little data



A little theory



▶ “But the biggest reason we question the value of time-outs has to do with a child’s profound need for connection.”

▶ “You don’t want to send the message that you’ll be in relationship with her when she’s “good” or happy, but you’ll withhold your love and affection when she’s not.”

▶ Siegel & Bryson, 2014, No-Drama Discipline

Why my training and research in attachment theory makes me nervous about time-outs

- ▶ There *is* a profound need for connection.
- ▶ Secure attachment is associated with better emotional regulation.
- ▶ Concern that time-out may lead to more avoidant strategy for coping with distress.

Organized Patterns of Attachment

INSECURE

SECURE

INSECURE

A1

A2

B other

B1

B3

B4

B other

C2

C1

avoidant-ignoring avoidant-neutral

secure-reserved

very secure

secure-dependent
secure-feisty
secure-controlling

ambivalent-resistant

ambivalent-immature

Focus on exploration and independence

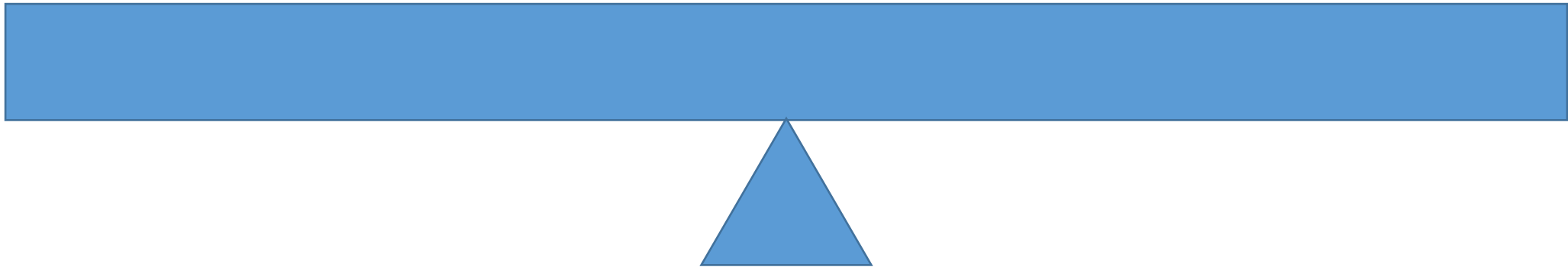
Balance between attachment & exploration

Focus on attachment relationship/affect

Secure

safe haven

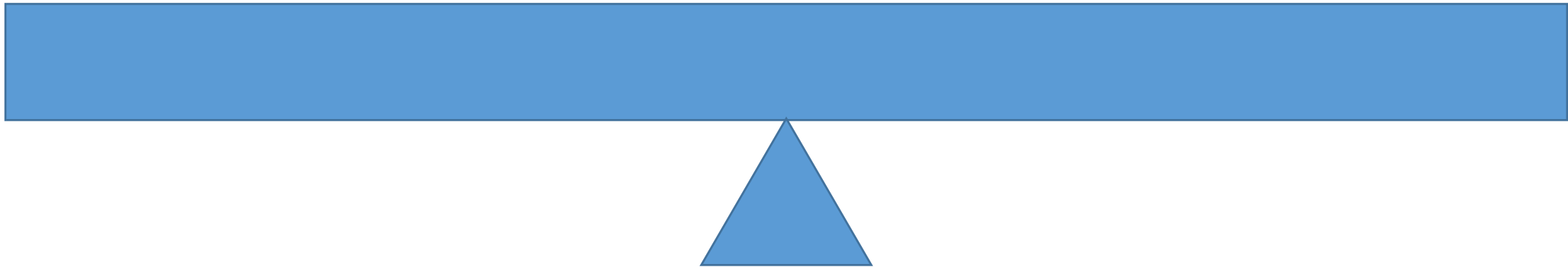
secure base



Secure

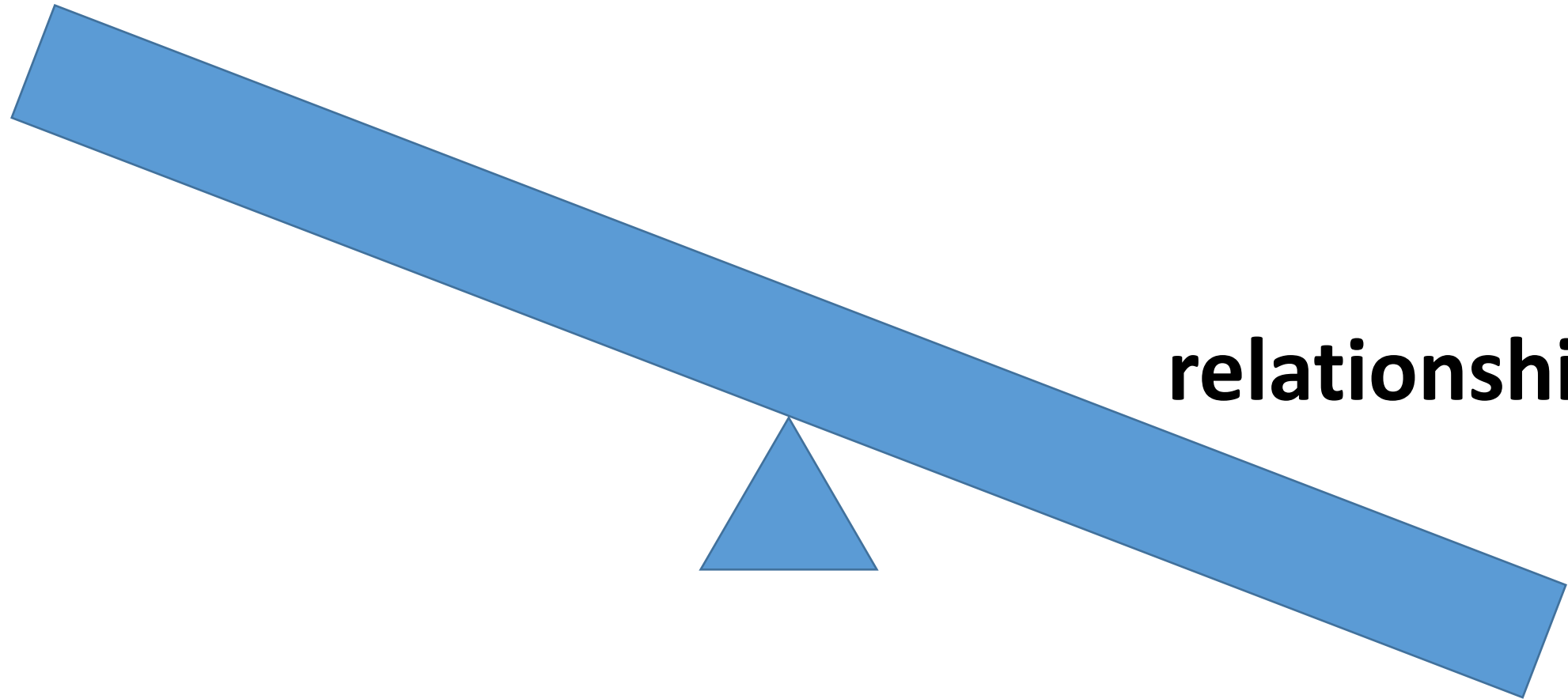
independence

relationship



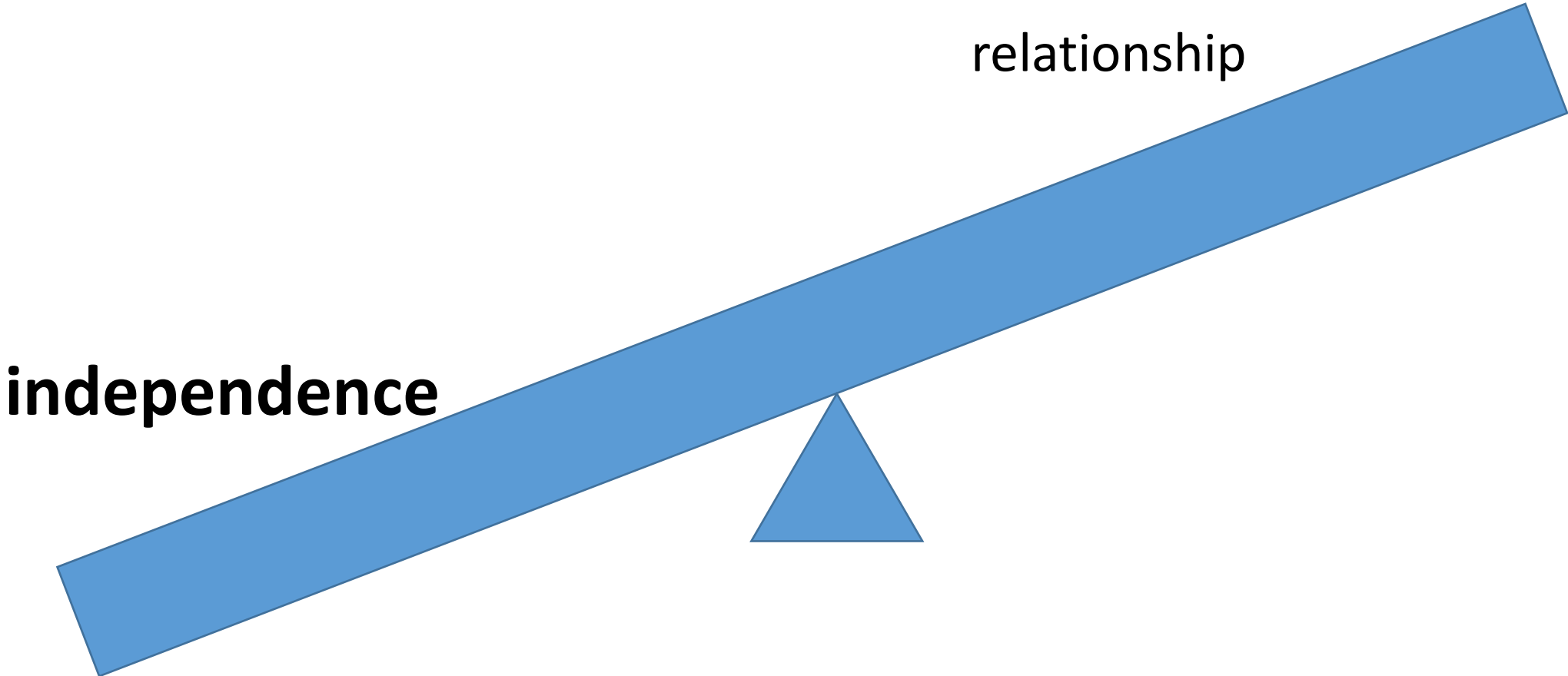
Insecure Ambivalent Resistant

independence



relationship

Insecure Avoidant



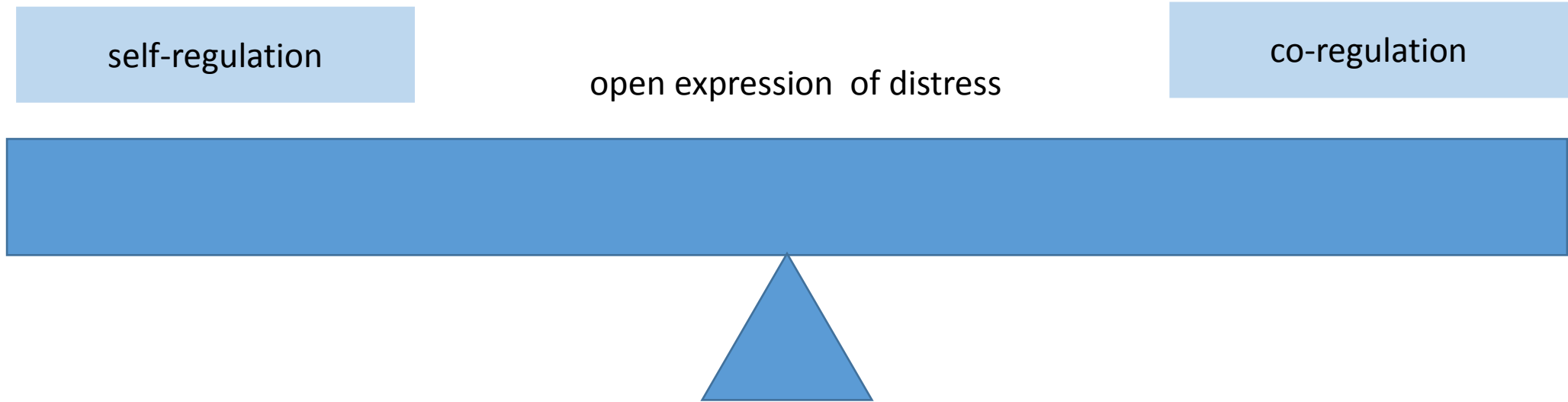
Attachment and Emotional Regulation

Secure

self-regulation

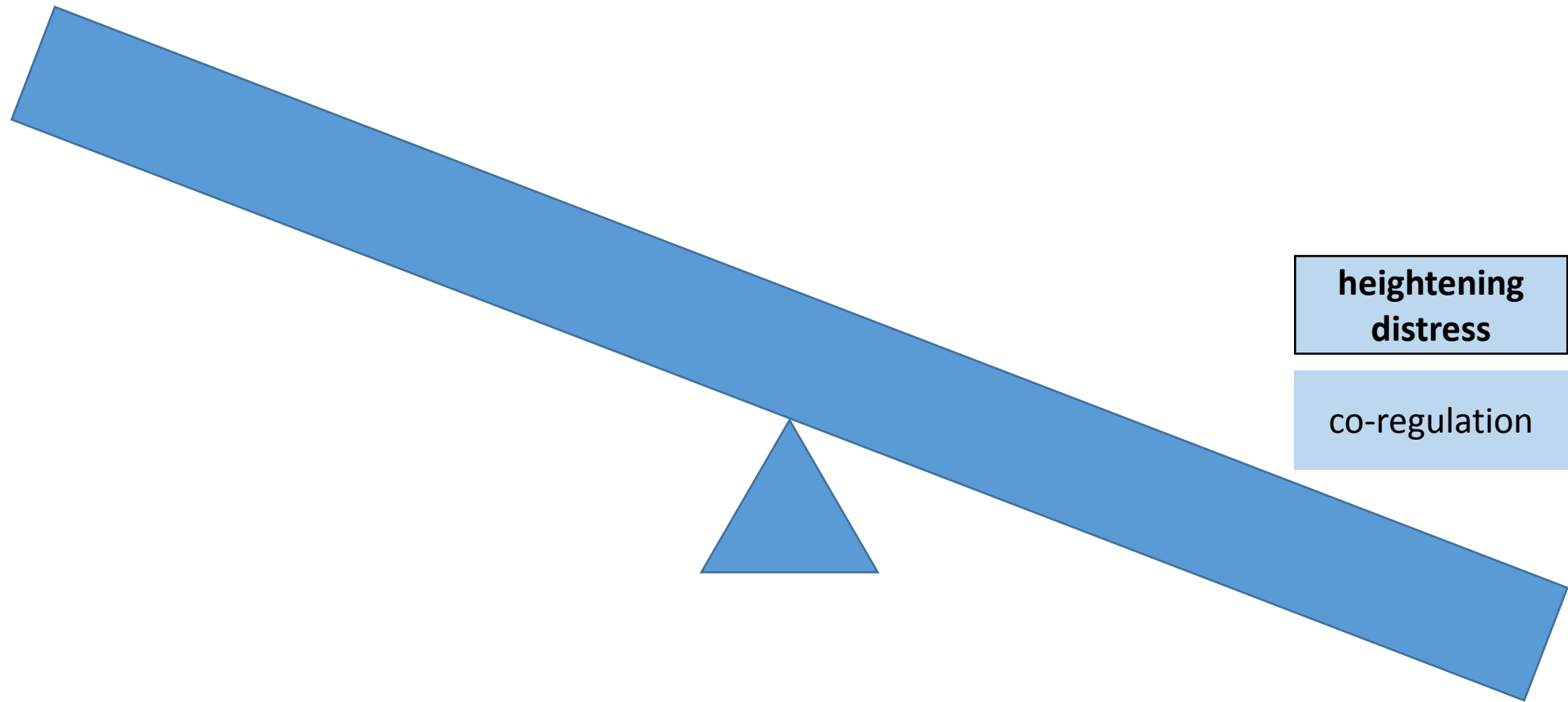
open expression of distress

co-regulation



Attachment and Emotional Regulation

Insecure Ambivalent Resistant

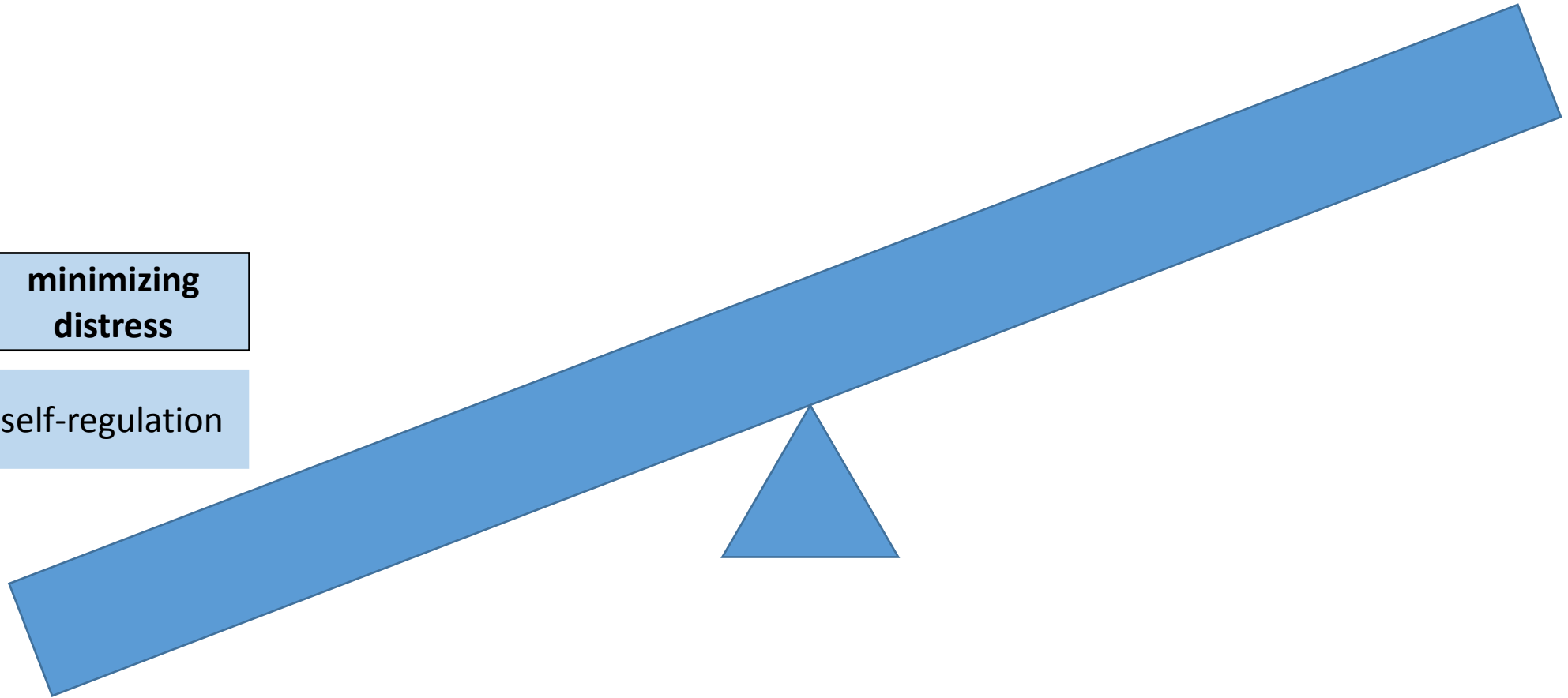


Attachment and Emotional Regulation

Insecure Avoidant

minimizing
distress

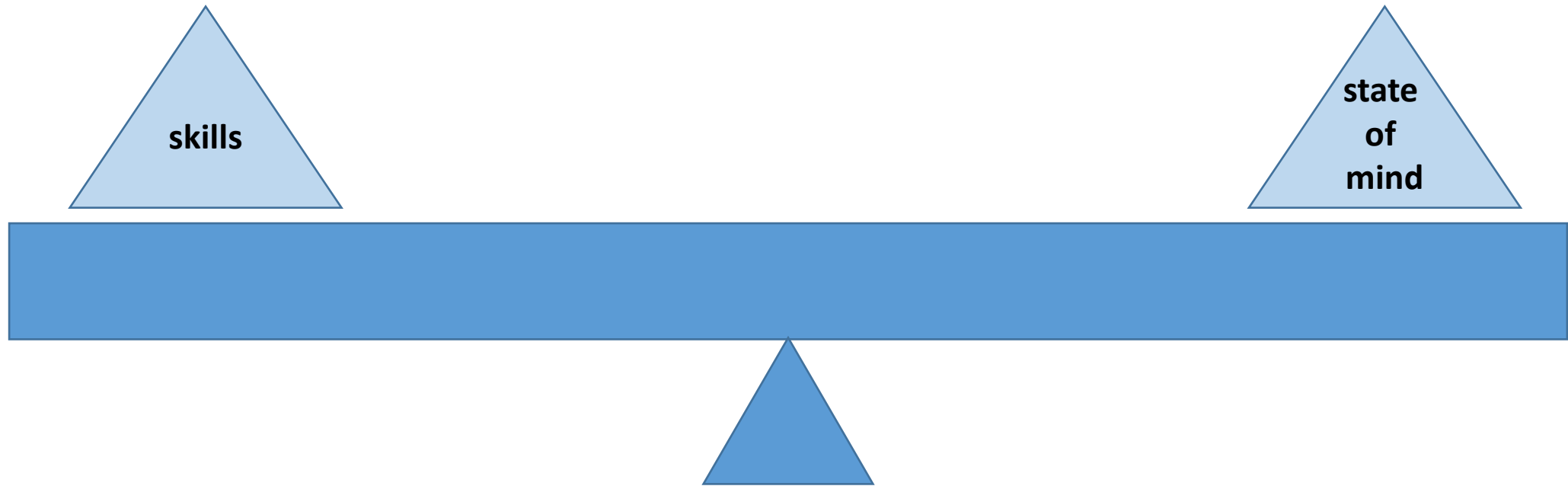
self-regulation



IoWA-PCIT

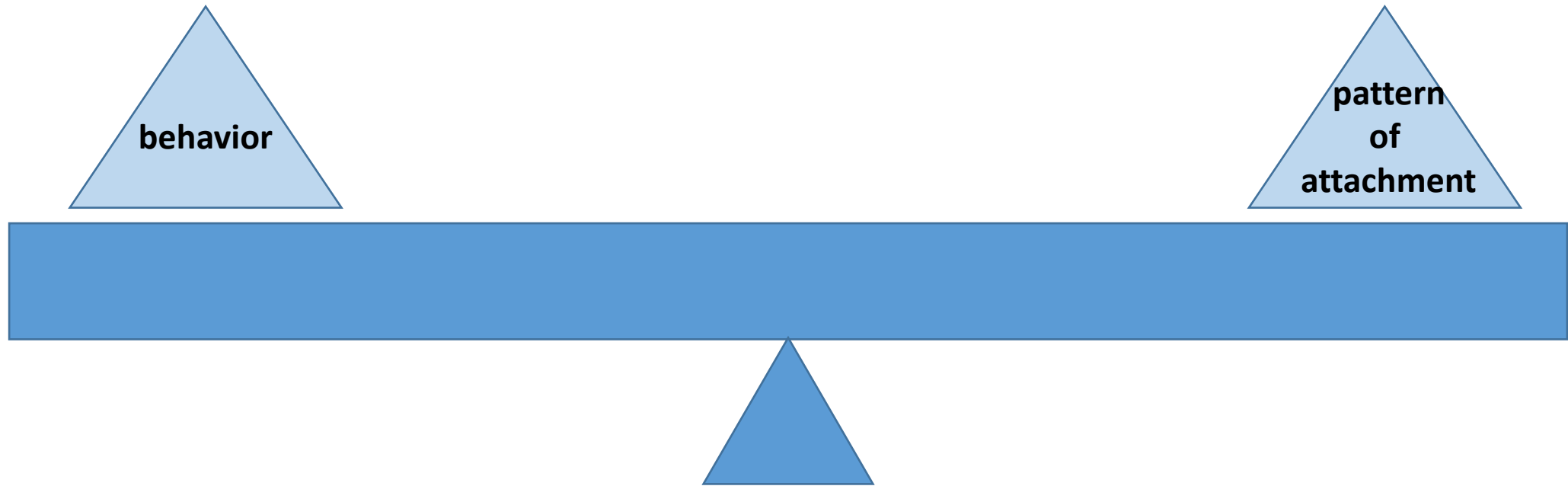
(Integration of Working Models of Attachment into Parent-Child Interaction Therapy)

Parent



IoWA-PCIT

Child-Parent Interaction





A little data

- Is there research on time-out and attachment using well-validated assessments of attachment security?

- No

- Is there research on post-PCIT outcomes using well-validated assessments of attachment security?

- No

Attachment Prior to IoWA-PCIT

INSECURE

SECURE

INSECURE

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

A1

A2

B other

B1

B3

B4

B other

C2

C1

avoidant-ignoring avoidant-neutral

secure-reserved

very secure

secure-dependent
secure-feisty
secure-controlling

ambivalent-immature

ambivalent-resistant

Focus on exploration & independence

Balance between attachment & exploration

Focus on relationship

minimization of distress

open expression of distress


heightening of distress

Attachment Following IoWA-PCIT (Including Teaching Parents to Use Time-Outs)

INSECURE			SECURE			INSECURE		
			X	XXX	XXX			
A1	A2	B other	B1	B3	B4	B other	C2	C1
avoidant-ignoring	avoidant-neutral		secure-reserved	very secure	secure-dependent secure-feisty secure-controlling		ambivalent-immature	ambivalent-resistant
Focus on exploration & independence			Balance between attachment & exploration			Focus on relationship		
minimization of distress			open expression of distress			heightening of distress		

Continuous Attachment Ratings

	Pre-IoWA-PCIT	Post-IoWA-PCIT	Effect size
Security (scale B)	5.4 (1.0)	6.4 (.8)	1.1*
Avoidance (scale A)	2.5 (1.8)	1.4 (.9)	-.8
Resistance (scale C)	2.5 (1.7)	1.7 (.7)	-.6



Did teaching parents to give time-outs hurt their attachment relationships with their children in these families?

No

none of the families had less secure relationships with their children after parents were taught to use time-out

Do we need more research on the impact of time-outs and PCIT on attachment?

Absolutely